

Western Region Essay Winner

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If I were to stand in front of you and speak, the first opinions many would form about me would be a result of my speech impediment. Sadly, many would not get past this superficial physicality. People have avoided me, called me names, and treated me differently all of my life. I realize this is their ignorance and not my inadequacy, but that does not change the fact that this unfair treatment is hurtful.

Why are people scared of others who are different? Despite its promise of being the land of the free and a place of equality, America is divided on so many ideas and principles, and, oftentimes, people are not treated fairly. For some, this stems from a difference regarding race, religion, economic status, or political and social views. No matter the cause, America will only become a place of unity when its citizens value diversity more than uniformity. People must continue to strive for the fair treatment of others.

One person who worked tirelessly for equality was Clarence M. Dunnville, Jr. Despite the fact that the Ku Klux Klan set a cross on fire on his front lawn when he was 9, he has dedicated his life to fighting for the fair treatment of others. He picketed segregated theaters and participated in sit-ins to desegregate lunch counters. In addition, he continues to fight to break the cycle of the school-to-prison pipeline. Dunnville is an inspiration to anyone who, despite being discriminated against, believes in the possibility of a world where all people are treated fairly.

I would like to help those kids who have felt hate and depression most of their lives and show them that they are not alone. I want them to know that there is someone in this world who feels the same as they do. I want to bring all these kids together and let them feel the love and kindness they have been missing all throughout their lives. I would like for these children to learn how to communicate their feelings with one another and be able to find others who are hurting so that they can help fill those broken hearts with love and care.